



South Wellington Coin Society

Volume 2 Issue 6

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For Almost 50 years the Canadian Numismatic Association has published research articles written by the members, first through the pages of the can bulletin and then the can journal. Many of these articles are lost to future numismatics who may be fortunate enough to acquire these past periodicals.

The SWCS would like to reprint a series of these article every month in our bulletin pages for you to enjoy. Starting with this month our feature article is "The Twenty Cent Pieces" written in 1964 by fellow SWCS member Ross Irwin. I am sure you will benefit from reading this paper for it stands up now as it did then, over 30 years ago.

Scott E. Douglas

Please be advised that the next meeting has been changed to a new date, for this month only. The new date will be July 2, 1998. The time will stay the same.

Thank you,
Bruno Kerkhof

South Wellington Coin Society

c/o Box 61 RR 4 Rockwood ON N0B 2K0

MEETINGS

7:30 on the first Wed. of every Month
at the Eramosa Community Library (Rockwood)

1997-1998 EXECUTIVE

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The Twenty Cent Pieces

By R. W. Irwin

The Province of Canada was formed in 1841 from the union of Lower and Upper Canada. At this time the dollar was rated in Halifax sterling at five shillings and in Halifax currency at four shillings and six pence. About 1850 talks were held with the governments of New Brunswick and Nova Scotia with reference to the desirability of establishing a uniform currency for British North America. This was set forth in a series of resolutions in 1851. It recommended a decimal system based on the dollar rated at five shillings.

In 1850 the Province of Canada gave authority to the Governor-in-Council to cause silver coins to be struck for circulation in Canada. These coins were to be 5/- 2/6, 1/3, 1/-, 6d and 3d or \$1, 50c, 25c, 10c, 5c. No action was taken and it was proposed during the session of 1852-53 that a gold coin of \$2.00 value with a silver coin one-tenth or 20c to be called a shilling should be issued. The majority of the legislature favoured the dollar and cents system so again nothing was done. The Currency Act of 1853 established the British shilling at 24 1/3c and was usually taken at 25c. In 1858 there was agitation to rate this coin at 24c. This coin's presence in Canada was the major influence in the decision to strike the 20c coin.

In 1857 the Act requiring government accounts to be rendered in dollars and cents meant that coins for this purpose must be procured. These were struck under authority of the Currency Act (16 Vict. c. 158, 1854) and were to be a token currency of limited legal tender.

On October 16, 1857 the treasury approved the proposal of the Master of the Royal Mint that the weight of the new 20c piece be 71.73 grains of 925 fine silver. Its diameter was 0.930 inches or 23 3/4 mm. Queen Victoria approved the design for the coin July 17, 1858. Patterns were struck having both a plain and milled edge. Canada ordered twenty cent coins to the value of \$150,000 or 750,000 coins. The coin was engraved by Leonard Wyon and struck at the Royal Mint. The order in the Canada Gazette of December 12, 1858 legalized their currency in the Province of Canada.

The Toronto Leader and other newspapers objected to the striking of the 20c piece instead of a 25c piece. It was accepted as an equal to the Halifax shilling which was worth the same value. The coins were used in the Post Offices and for legal tender payments. The government saw its error and corrected it at the first opportunity.

Prior to and just following Confederation of the Provinces the systematic withdrawal of all foreign silver was carried out. This was substituted by a domestic issue in 1870 in which a 25-cent coin was used in place of the old 20-cent piece. The Minister of Finance in his proclamation of September 9, 1870 asked that the 20c coins be withdrawn from circulation by the banks since the 25c coin was more convenient for the public.

The coins were withdrawn over the years and the following nominal values were received as twenty-five cent pieces: 1885—\$18,000; 1888—\$17,174; 1889—\$16,585; 1894—\$14,518; 1899—\$18,895 and in 1906—\$7,461. A few old five and ten cent coins were included in the last two recoinages and it is also possible that other quantities were melted down in other years although it is strange that the fact is not mentioned in the mint reports. The total of the above infers that the circulation is still 286,835. This does not agree with the figures of the mint as given by Taylor and James which states that only 35,000 remain in circulation. It is the

author's opinion that this figure is too small.

By 1891 the twenty cent piece had disappeared from circulation. Breton in 1894 gave its value as equal to face. The 1907 price list gives a range of 25 to 35 cents but in 1912 the list states no premium is paid for this coin. Breton states that a nickel counterfeit exists and Zoel shows a cracked die minor variety.

In New Brunswick the Currency Act of 1860 authorized the striking of coins. The 20c coin was equal to one shilling currency. The coin was the same weight, size and fineness as that of Canada. A striking of \$30,000 was made in 1862 and a further \$30,000 in 1864. These coins were assimilated into Canada and made current by the Uniform Currency Act of 1871. Newfoundland produced coins of this denomination from 1865 until 1912. They were always a problem for Canada so the 25 cent piece was substituted by mutual agreement in 1917. These coins are also a part of Canadian currency although they had largely disappeared from circulation by 1949.

The United States had minted a 25 cent piece from 1796 but on March 3, 1875 a 20 cent piece was authorized which was similar in size and design to the 25 cent coin. Complaints were numerous and the coins were only minted from 1875 to 1878. The Canadian Post, Lindsay, of September 3, 1875 states: "A new silver coin has just made its appearance which is likely to cause some inconvenience owing to its approximation in size to two current Canadian coins, viz., the 25 and 20 cent pieces. It is an American 20 cent piece not quite as large as our 20 cent coin, and not quite as heavy. Another difference between it and our 20 cent piece in general appearance is that it is not milled. By the exercise of about the same amount of vigilance that is now necessary to distinguish between our 25 cent and 20 cent coins, any one may easily avoid taking it for the latter. Like all other American silver coins, it is subject to discount in this country."

The 20 cent coins are type items necessary for any collection. A well struck copy is a joy to behold and own; a reminder of the growing pains in our achieving decimal currency.

ARTICLE ORIGINALLY PUBLISHED
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AUCTION FOR WEDNESDAY, July 1st 1998

<u>LOT</u>	<u>DESCRIPTION</u>	<u>EST.VALUE</u>	<u>RESERVE</u>	<u>BID</u>
1.	Royal Australian Mint- uncirculated set 1996	20.00	10.00	
2.	Royal Australian Mint- One Dollar 1984	3.50	1.75	
3.	Royal Australian Mint-Ten Dollar silver 1989	35.00	17.50	
4.	Royal Australian Mint- uncirculated set 1994	18.00	9.00	
5.	Royal Mint UK Queen Elizabeth 40 th 1993	15.00	7.50	
6.	UK 2 pound coin- second world war 1995	10.00	5.00	
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7.	Royal Australian Mint 5 Dollar coin 1994	10.00	5.00	
8.	Israel Jewish Leaders 1993	20.00	10.00	
9.	Israel 27 th Anniv. Mint Set 1975	14.00	7.00	
10.	Israel 28 th Anniv. Mint Set 1996	9.00	4.50	
11.	Replica of the Worlds first Dollar	??.??	3.00	
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12.	1967 confederation medal, Marks Work Warehouse, Maple Leaf pin 3pcs	4.00	2.00	
13.	<u>Trade Dollars:</u> Acton 1974, Port Colborne 1970, Welland 1978, Cape Breton 1986 (4pcs)	10.00	5.00	
14.	Prince of Wales-Lady Diana, B.Ward Beam, Heads I win-Tales you lose, Las Vegas Casino	8.00	4.00	
15.	<u>France:</u> 1 Franc 1943, 2 Francs 1944, 1 Franc 1961, (3pcs)	5.00	2.50	
16.	<u>South Africa:</u> 1 shilling 1897 made into a Necklace.	??.??	17.00	
17.	<u>Switzerland:</u> 10 centimes 1944, ½ Franc 1963, <u>Portugal:</u> .50 Centavos 1929 (3pcs)	3.00	1.50	
18.	<u>Greece:</u> 5 APAXMAI 1930 <u>Russia:</u> 5 Kopecks 1877 (2pcs)	6.00	3.00	
19.	1967 confederation medal, 1953 Coronation Medal, 1927 Coronation Medal, 1939 Royal Visit (4pcs)	5.00	2.50	
20.	<u>Spain:</u> 2 Pesetas 1879, <u>Austria:</u> 10 shillings 1958 <u>Japan:</u> 2 Sen 1882, 1 Sen 1915 (4pcs)	17.00	8.50	